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he criticises severely not only the legal tender legislation and the halting and vacillating attempts to get us out of the trouble into which it had plunged us, but the silver purchase laws as well, and especially the unwarranted suppression of state bank notes by a federal tax, manifestly not designed to afford revenue.

In the main the book deals with facts, which are marshaled in such a way as to make a strong case against those who have been responsible for our legislation. In his reasoning, however, he is not always entirely sound. For example, in his analysis of the question of note issue, Mr. Belmont permits a popular notion to lead him astray. It is not primarily "as a bulwark against the knavish, and to protect the incompetent," that government gets the authority to regulate and supervise bank issues: it is because some such regulation and supervision are necessary in order that bank notes should reach their highest usefulness as tools of exchange. And the limit of proper government regulation is the point where further interference restricts rather than facilitates the usefulness of the currency.

No attempt is made to set forth any plan for the reformation of the currency. The book distinctly represents the position of the "outs," whose policy is to criticise the action of the "ins," rather than suggest just what should be done.

L. CARROLL ROOT.

Cases on American Constitutional Law. Edited by CARL EVANS BOYD. Chicago: Callaghan and Company, 1898. 8vo. pp. xi + 678.

THE large place given to the study of the constitutional law of the United States in the colleges of this country, and the recognized advantage of introducing the student to original expositions of the doctrine of the constitution, have led teachers into some degree of embarrassment on account of the difficulty of obtaining access to the decisions of the supreme court. Even where all the reports of the court are on the shelves of the library, the inconvenience is only slightly lessened. Where, in a class of fifty persons, reference is made to a case, all members of the class have need to read it at about the same time, and it is evident that only a few of them will succeed; and consequently, not succeeding at the most appropriate time, other subjects will occupy their attention, and, except in rare instances, they will

never succeed. The only way out of the practical difficulty is to require each student to provide himself with a copy of the more important cases, and this is now made possible by the publication of the collection edited by Dr. Boyd. Less extensive than Professor Thayer's collection, it embraces in a volume of nearly seven hundred pages the most important decisions on the leading constitutional questions that have arisen in the course of our governmental history. These decisions are grouped under certain headings which constitute the divisions of the book. The several groups of decisions bear on the following subjects: the validity of legislation, taxation, money, commerce, the police power, general (implied) powers, executive powers, war, *ex post facto* laws and bills of attainder, impairment of contracts, civil and political rights, the federal government and the states, international relations, Indian affairs, jurisdiction of the federal courts, political questions, and the enforcement of executive power by judicial process. Through the use of these decisions it will be possible to give to instruction in constitutional law, even in undergraduate courses, a more attractive or less sterile form.

BERNARD MOSES.

A Discourse Concerning the Currencies of the British Plantations in America. By WILLIAM DOUGLASS. Edited by CHARLES J. BULLOCK, PH.D. (Economic Studies of the American Economic Association.) New York: The Macmillan Company, 1897. 12mo. pp. 111.

DR. WILLIAM DOUGLASS was a Scotch physician, born in 1691, who early came to Boston, and there pursued his profession, gaining a considerable reputation in medicine and incidentally publishing several works on economic subjects. Of these writings the present *Discourse* is one of the best, Dr. Bullock, indeed, ranking it "next to Pelatiah Webster's *Political Essays*." The reprint contains, besides the tract itself, an interesting biographical and critical sketch of Dr. Douglass by the editor.

The *Discourse Concerning the Currencies* first made its appearance in London in 1739, and was but one of a multitude of controversial pamphlets on the monetary question. Long before it was printed, a systematic agitation for the debasement of the currency had been going on. Private individuals had issued their own notes as money, and